



**Billing Code: 3510-22-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**RIN 0648-XD900**

**Marine Mammals; File No. 18786**

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice; issuance of permit.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that a permit has been issued to NMFS Office of Protected Resources, Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program (Responsible Party: Teri Rowles, D.V.M., Ph.D.), 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, to take, import, and export marine mammals and marine mammal parts for research and enhancement purposes.

**ADDRESSES:** The permit and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427-8401; fax (301) 713-0376.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Amy Sloan or Jennifer Skidmore, (301) 427-8401.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On May 1, 2015, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (80 FR 24903) that a request for a permit to conduct research and

enhancement on marine mammals had been submitted by the above-named applicant. The requested permit has been issued under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR 222-226), and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*).

Permit No. 18786 authorizes the MMHSRP to: (1) Carry out response, rescue, rehabilitation and release of threatened and endangered marine mammals under NMFS jurisdiction (Cetacea and Pinnipedia [excluding walrus]), and disentanglement of all marine mammals under NMFS jurisdiction, pursuant to sections 109(h), 112(c), and Title IV of the MMPA; and, carry out such activities as enhancement pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA; (2) Conduct health-related, bona fide scientific research studies on marine mammals and marine mammal parts under NMFS jurisdiction pursuant to sections 104(c) and Title IV of the MMPA and section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA, including research related to emergency response that may involve compromised animals, and research on healthy animals that have not been subject to emergency response (e.g., baseline health studies); (3) Conduct Level B harassment on all marine mammal species under NMFS jurisdiction incidental to MMHSRP activities in the U.S.; and (4) Collect, salvage, receive, possess, transfer, import, export, analyze, and curate marine mammal specimens under NMFS jurisdiction for purposes delineated in numbers (1) and (2) above. The permit expires June 30, 2020.

An environmental assessment (EA) was prepared analyzing the effects of the permitted activities on the human environment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*). Based on the analyses in the EA, NMFS determined that issuance of the permit would not significantly impact the quality of the human environment and that preparation of an environmental impact statement was not required. That determination is documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

As required by the ESA, issuance of this permit was based on a finding that such permit: (1) was applied for in good faith; (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of such endangered species; and (3) is consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: July 9, 2015.

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Julia Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources,  
National Marine Fisheries Service.  
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